

**CITY OF ROCKVILLE PLANNING DIVISION  
STAFF REPORT**

March 5, 2001

**SUBJECT:**

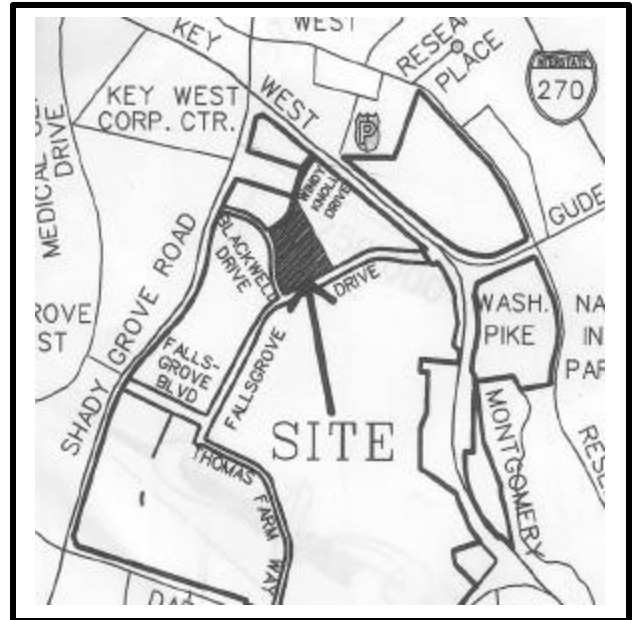
Detailed Application CPD2000-0004M for  
Comprehensive Planned Development  
CPD1999-0004, Falls Grove

Applicant: Thomas Farm, LLC  
c/o The Bozzuto Group  
6401 Golden Triangle Dr., Suite 200  
Greenbelt, MD 20770

Owner: Falls Grove Associates

Date Filed: January 3, 2001

Location: A portion of Falls Grove at the  
intersection  
of Blackwell Road and Falls Grove Drive  
(Gude extended), generally described as  
Phase II.



*Proposed Location*

**REQUEST:**

The applicant seeks detailed (final) approval for 140 multi-family condominium units at the above location. The units will be in four multi-family buildings that are each four stories tall. The total number of units also includes 15 Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (MPDUs) scattered throughout the buildings.



**PREVIOUS RELATED ACTIONS:**

- CPD99-0004, Concept Plan Application for Comprehensive Planned Development approved by the Mayor and Council, February 22, 2000.
- CDP2000-0004A through J, Detailed Applications for Comprehensive Planned Development CPD99-0004. All approved by the Planning Commission.

## ANALYSIS:

### Background

On February 22, 2000, the Mayor and Council approved CPD99-0004, authorizing development on the former Thomas Farm site, now known as Falls Grove. The approval authorized a total of 1,530 dwelling units, 150,000 square feet of commercial retail and 950,000 square feet of office/research and development space. A Comprehensive Planned Development is implemented through the approval of individual detailed applications for all or part of a development as required in Section 25-656 of the Zoning Ordinance. This application is part of a series of detailed applications.

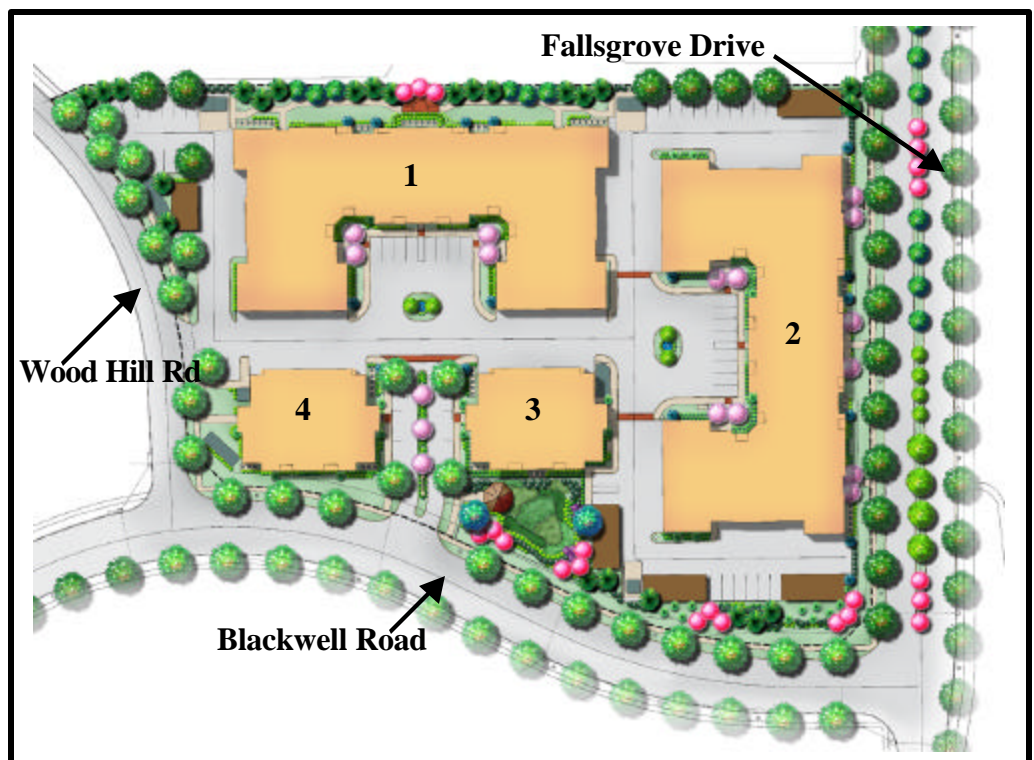
### Property Description

Falls Grove consists of approximately 254 acres bounded by Shady Grove Road, Darnestown Road, West Montgomery Avenue and Research Boulevard. This application encompasses approximately 4.5 acres of land in an area that the approved Falls Grove Concept Plan identified as multi-family land use. Three streets, including Blackwell Road, Wood Hill Road and Falls Grove Drive, as well as an additional parcel of land that the Concept Plan identified as multi-family, bound the site. Land uses adjacent to this site include the park/school site across Falls Grove Drive and office parcels across Blackwell Road and Wood Hill Road, as well as the aforementioned multi-family parcel directly adjacent to this site. No detailed applications have been filed for any adjacent parcels.

The topography of this site varies from gently rolling on a majority of the site to flat. Some of the gentle roll of the terrain on the Blackwell Road frontage will create the need for a small, decorative retaining wall.

### Proposal

The applicant requests detailed application approval for 140 multi-family condo units on approximately 4.5 acres of land, generally located in the vicinity of the intersection of Blackwell Road and Falls Grove Drive. The units will be in four buildings that are each four stories in height. There are two types of buildings with this application. The two largest buildings of the proposal are labeled as Building 1 and Building 2.





They will each have 55 units associated with them, as well as 32 integral garages that provide “half-cover” tandem parking spaces. These half-cover tandem spaces are recessed areas under the façade of the building that are approximately 12 feet deep and continue to the face of the garage. Building 1 will also have four MPDUs and Building 2 will have five. Buildings 3 and 4 are the smaller of the structures, containing 15 units each. They also have eight garages providing eight half-cover tandem parking spaces. Buildings 3 and 4 will each have three MPDUs.



All of the buildings have four-sided architectural characteristics, giving the buildings presence on street frontages, as well as internally to the site. The main entrance of the site is from Blackwell Road, which leads between the smaller Buildings 3 and 4 to a front circular entrance of Building 1. A fountain in the front of Building 1 will create a formal entry

appearance for the site. Building 2, the other large structure of the site, will create the dominant presence on Falls Grove Drive, as well as to the interior of the site. This building will be perpendicular to Building 1, and will also have a fountain feature in the front. The setback of Building 2 from Falls Grove Drive will be 20 feet. Building 4 along the Blackwell Road frontage will be the closest to a street at 12 feet. The Concept Plan allows for a 10-foot front yard setback. There is also a secondary entrance to the entire site from Wood Hill Road

The site also contains accessory garage structures that are typically located on the periphery of the application, providing additional covered parking for the site. There are also four dumpster pads located on the site, which will be enclosed with a decorative structure that is common to Falls Grove applications. To the rear of Building 1, there will be a planting area that will provide landscape amenities and a pedestrian walkway that will travel the entire length of Building 1, parallel to the property line. This walkway and planting area will provide open space, building access, and future access to the adjoining multi-family parcel. In addition, there will be a gazebo that will protrude over a stormwater management (SWM) bioretention facility located between Blackwell Road and Building 3. At least two Falls Grove design bus shelters



will be provided, with locations to be determined in the future as further transit routes are established.

### **Architecture**

The buildings will have a variety of textures and materials associated with them, including brick facades and siding. The colors being used will be from soft earth tone and pastel palettes. The angled rooflines of Buildings 1 and 2 will be accented with a series of false dormers and a cupola that will give the buildings a distinctive appearance. At 284 feet long, 137 feet in depth and 52 feet (four stories) tall, Buildings 1 and 2 will create a significant presence on the site, with Building 2 providing a significant presence along the Falls Grove Drive frontage.

Buildings 3 and 4, are the same height and design as the first two buildings, but are significantly smaller in length at 108 feet and 76 feet in depth. These two buildings frame the entrance of the site leading to the front entrance of Building 1 and its decorative entry features. The buildings will have four-sided architecture and none of the integral garages of any of the buildings face streets. Four-sided architecture in the context of this application refers to the fact that the buildings will be accessible from all four sides, and will have the same architectural features in the same scale and proportion on all the facades.

In addition to the above, there will be a variety of architectural embellishments on the buildings, including balconies and railings, roofline and gable treatments, and architectural eyebrows above the first and second story windows.

### **Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (MPDUs)**

There are 15 MPDUs associated with this application, and they are dispersed throughout the four buildings that comprise this development. Buildings 1 will have four MPDUs, Building 2 will contain five MPDUs, and Buildings 3 and 4 each contain three. The dispersal and number of MPDUs (10.5 percent of the total number of units provided) is consistent with the Concept Plan.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Approval is recommended, subject to the following conditions:

1. Submission, for approval by the Chief of Planning, of eleven (11) copies of the site plan, revised according to Planning Commission Exhibit A.
2. Submission, for approval by the Department of Public Works (DPW), of the following detailed plans, studies and computations:
  - a. Stormwater Management (SWM) concept computations to support the plan for the on-site BMPs.
  - b. Sediment control plans.
  - c. Public Improvement plans (water and sewer, storm drain and paving).

- d. Any notes on the plans.
4. Bonds be posted and permits obtained from DPW.
5. Submission of a revised SWM concept plan.
6. Provide one water meter to serve site, located at the property line (not in the driveway).
7. Any on-site sanitary sewer will be a private system.
8. Obtain permission to grade off-site prior to grading permit issuance.
9. The three off-site water system improvements, as indicated in the June 23, 2000 letter to Cox Companies, must be completed prior to occupancy permit issuance for this site. The PWK permit to construct the off-site water improvements must be issued prior to PWK permit issuance for this site.
10. Permits for site will not be issued until Fallsgrove Associates has received a permit from the City for the wastewater outfall sewer and stormwater outfall sewer for the site.
11. Occupancy permit will not be issued until Fallsgrove Associates constructs the wastewater pump station, wastewater outfall to the site, and outfall storm sewer to the site, and DPW accepts these improvements for permanent maintenance and ownership.
12. Fallsgrove Associates must complete all phase I off-site transportation improvements by August 9, 2003; and must complete all phase II and III improvements by August 9, 2005.
13. Permits for site will not be issued until Fallsgrove Associates has received City permits for the retrofit of Pond #3. Occupancy permits will not be issued until the work is completed and accepted by DPW.
14. Other comments on Exhibits A and B.
15. Submission for the approval of the Chief of Planning, of 11 copies of a Landscape Plan that is revised according to Planning Commission Exhibit B.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

### **Traffic**

A traffic study was done as part of the Concept Plan approval, and this application is in compliance with the approved Concept Plan. Mitigation of the traffic impacts were required as part of the Concept Plan. Mitigation measures include the construction of improvements to 12 intersections, construction of a transit center, payment of \$1.6 million for Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures, and construction of on-site roads.

The Applicant has provided a bond in the amount of \$2.2 million for required off-site traffic improvements, as per the requirements of the Concept Plan. It should be noted that the Resolution of Approval requires that all Phase I off-site road improvements, as outlined within the Resolution on page 26, must be completed within three years of the issuance of the first grading permit.

### **Parking**

Based on the number of units, the development is required to have 216 parking spaces. There will be 236 spaces provided in the form of surface lots, garage spaces, tandem spaces and accessory garage parking. There will be 49 surface spaces, 80 garage spaces, which are provided within the multi-family building structure, 78 tandem "half cover" spaces in front of the previously mentioned garage spaces, and 19 spaces provided in accessory garages on the site. Of these accessory garages, four buildings will each house four spaces, and one garage will provide three spaces. There are also six handicap spaces provided.

There are also a limited number of parallel spaces on the internal streets of the development, as well as some of the perimeter streets. These areas will accommodate some visitor parking. Parking on public streets, although allowed, shall not be marked, and is not included in the required parking numbers for the site. Parking on Falls Grove Drive will be restricted during the morning and evening peak traffic periods.

### **Pedestrian Access and Bicycle Paths**

The entire site is interconnected via pedestrian paths and sidewalks. There are leadwalks and sidewalks that will connect the site to Falls Grove Drive. Falls Grove Drive will have part of the bicycle path network on the opposite side of the street, adjacent to the park/school site. Pedestrian access is also provided along the rear of the site adjacent to Building 1 which will ultimately provide cross site access to the adjacent, but as of yet undeveloped, multi-family parcel.

### **Transit**

The Concept Plan includes a multi-modal transit stop as part of the retail center. This multi-family area is in close proximity to the transit center associated with the approved retail center. The development will provide easy access via walking or biking to amenities provided by the future park/school site, including the proposed community center associated with the park/school site, the amenities and transit facilities associated with the retail center, and overall community facilities located within close proximity.

## **STORMWATER MANAGEMENT**

A stormwater management (SWM) facility located at the intersection of West Montgomery Avenue and Darnestown Road serves this site. This SWM area, referred to as Pond #3 and approved for alteration by Detailed Application CPD2000-0004A, is an area the approved Concept Plan has identified as a SWM area. Prior to exiting the site and entering the public storm drain system, a portion of the site's runoff will be directed to a 4,800 square foot on-site bioretention facility to meet the state's new recharge volume requirement. This bioretention area is located along Blackwell Road

at the main entrance of the site, between the road and Building 3, and will also serve a decorative purpose, with plantings surrounding and a gazebo protruding over the area. There will be a small retaining wall to the rear of this facility given grade considerations.

## **LANDSCAPING**

There are approximately 1.37 acres of open and green space proposed with this application, which represents approximately 30% of the site. This development area has been identified by the Concept Plan as an area of significant density. A landscape plan for the site has been provided as Planning Commission Exhibit "B."

## **Forest/Tree Preservation**

See condition number fifteen (15).

## **Equipment Screening**

All transformers are proposed to be underground consistent with City requirements. If an applicant proposes to place equipment above ground, it must be approved in accordance with the submission and approval of a waiver of the city's underground utility requirements. This waiver must be approved by the City of Rockville Planning Commission.

There are numerous air conditioning units associated with this application, located in a variety of locations. The units are being screened with significant landscaping and small decorative brick walls or wood fences, the details of which are provided on the landscaping plan. Through numerous discussions with Staff, the Applicant has placed a majority of condenser units on the roof of the building, screening them from view by a parapet wall.

## **STAFF COMMENTS**

This application is consistent with the approved Concept Plan, and staff recommends approval subject to the conditions listed earlier. Staff believes the layout of the site is functional and convenient, with particular attention given to four-sided architecture. The architecture and massing of the buildings, particularly on major streets, will relate well to the rest of the Falls Grove project.

Staff must acknowledge that the scale and massing of the buildings are significant. This is particularly true of Buildings 1 and 2, given their 284-foot lengths. These are going to be significant buildings on the Falls Grove site. However, given the location of this project within a designated multi-family area of the Concept Plan and the land uses surrounding this site, this project will be in scale with surrounding uses. The surrounding land uses include office, including an office project by Lerner across Blackwell Road and Doctor Young's two office buildings, the 18-acre park/school site across Falls Grove Drive, and another multi-family parcel adjacent to this project. Staff feels the open space parcel across Falls Grove Drive will be appropriately framed by the significant presence of this building. The scale of this project should also present a balanced residential element when juxtaposed against significant mixed-use office in the general vicinity.

Staff also believes the density and scale of the project is appropriate given the transit-oriented nature of the community and the proximity to the village center and multi-modal transit center.

Staff endorses this application as meeting the full intent of the multi-family component of the approved Concept Plan and the accompanying resolution.

## NOTIFICATION

Notices were sent to approximately 750 residences, businesses and association presidents. Some of the subdivisions include, but were not limited to, Glenora Hills, Rockshire, the Willows, Carter Hill, Watts Branch Meadows, Cambridge Heights, Ivy Woods and Flintledge Estates.

## APPROVAL LIMITATIONS

Section 25-193(d) of the Zoning Ordinance requires that **construction or operation must commence within two (2) years of the date of this decision or application approval shall expire.**

If the applicant can show just cause, a maximum of two (2) time extensions may be granted by the Planning Commission, each not to exceed one year. However, time extensions are not automatically approved, and sufficient detail and justification will be required in order for the Planning Commission to consider granting an extension.

## CONCLUSION

Staff believes that this application is consistent with the approved Concept Plan approved by the Mayor and Council for this area of Fallsgrove. As a result, staff recommends approval of Detailed Application CPD2000-0004M with the conditions noted above.

Attachments